

## **MAKATO – “That Way”; A Unique Aklan Town - by Prof Tumbokon**

A former Malayan settlement established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Makato is now one of the seventeen municipalities of Aklan, the Ati-atihan province and unique in its autonomous celebration of the Sto. Niño and Ati-atihan Festival on the 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> of January every year, just a week ahead of the Kalibo Ati-atihan Festival.

Makato is now considered as one of the most progressive municipalities of the Ati-atihan province.

In 1800, during the Spanish colonization period, the name Makato was changed to Taft in honor of the then United States President, William Howard Taft. But in 1923, Representative Manuel Terencio, representing the third district of Capiz, authorized a bill restoring to its former name Makato which inhabitants revered up to this day.

The name Makato is said to be a product of lingual failure between the natives and the Spaniards. When the latter came to the place by the way of “Tigao River” later christened by Spaniards as “Rio de Makato,” they asked the natives of the name of the river and promptly replied: “Makato,” which means “That Way”. The Spaniards believed they got the right answer and just as promptly, named the place Makato.

Situated nine kilometers northwest of the capital town of Kalibo, Makato lost a substantial portion of its territory in 1947 with the passage of legislation raising the status of Tangalan to a township.

The 22,444 inhabitants continue to enjoy socio economic progress and prosperity from its 66,011 hectares of productive uplands, lowlands and coastal areas. It is composed of eighteen barangays including the Poblacion. It has two market days; Saturday and Tuesday, where merchants and housewives bring their fresh fruits, fish, corn, rice, vegetables, root crops and other staple foods for sale.

With its four (4) public and one (1) private secondary schools and two (2) tertiary level of educational system, the literacy rate of its populace is high. It has a public library with adequate books for research and reading pleasure by the general public. For indoor sports and social activities, the Gov. Augusto B. Legaspi Memorial Hall is available to provide venue.

### **TOWN FIESTA**

The Town’s Sto. Niño and Ati-atihan Festival dates back to the time when the Spaniards came to plant the seeds of Christianity into this land. The Ati-atihan Festival, however, was alleged to have been started way back before the Spaniards came. In this joint celebration, thousands of devotees to the Holy Child from all over the country and those abroad feel the urge to come and join in the wholesome frolic and religious fervor of thanksgiving to Santo Niño, the Patron Saint of the town. The observance of these festivities has always been resounding success.

### **ABOUT THE MIRACULOUS CHILD**

A story that relates after the establishment of the Spaniards in the Panay Island, they warned the natives of impending pirates attack. The natives had to defend the seacoast and had to camouflage themselves to blend with the surrounding vegetation. When the pirates landed on the shore, they saw a little boy playing unmindful of the presence of the pirates. The pirates presumed that the boy must have been left out of neglect by his scampering parents. The leader of the pirates took and cuddled the boy in his arms while his men looted the house of valuable items. Finding the place desolate, the leader left the child and ordered his men to leave.

Seeing the pirates from the seashore, the inhabitants searched for the child. He simply vanished and the people concluded it must have been a miracle of the Sto. Niño, an occurrence which strengthen their faith in the Holy Child.

Another miracle tells of the fisherman who found a driftwood in his net only to discover later it was the image of the Sto. Niño. The people built a chapel for the image. The people in the Poblacion wanted the image for their own church so they brought it to the town church only to find later that it disappeared and returned to the barrio chapel. It only stayed in the Poblacion church after the people vowed to celebrate the feast of the Sto. Niño every year. The people of Makato devotedly adopted him as their patron saint. His festivity is highlighted by a coronation of a child who symbolizes the Holy Child Jesus.

### **HISTORIC MILITARY ENCOUNTER**

Makato has two military encounters which took place at Barangay Tina. The Filipino–American war in 1989 and Japanese Imperial Army occupation of Panay Island during World War II. Filipino troops led by Capt. Juan Tagle fought American combat patrol to the last stand before Capiz defenders were subdued. On the other hand, Filipino freedom fighters engaged in Japanese patrol in a hand-to-hand combat wherein then Sgt. Dominador F. Perez (now Attorney-at-law) sustained wounds and was awarded “Purple Heart Awards” by the President of the United States of America on January 19, 1953.

### **TOURISM POTENTIALS**

The municipalities of Makato has two areas which, when fully developed, would attract tourist, both local and foreign. These are the “Salimuno falls” located at Barangay Libang about 7 kilometers from the Poblacion and is accessible by land transportation. Even during the dry season, crystal clear water cascaded incessantly that one cannot resist the urge to dip into it and enjoy its refreshing effect. The other one is the Baybay beach. It is located about 8 kilometers from the Poblacion via Albasan, Numancia and is accessible by only land transportation. Upon completion of the Hagachac-Alibagon Bridge, travel time would be reduced to a minimum of ten minutes.

### **MAKATO'S ILLUSTRIOUS SONS AND DAUGHTERS**

The town has produced illustrious sons and daughters who distinguished themselves both in the national and local governance. Among them is Hon. Jose B. Legaspi, father of former governor of Aklan, Corazon Legaspi Cabagnot, who served for two terms as governor and one term as congressman; Hon. Rafael B. Legaspi, the former consul in Hawaii, who served as congressman before the Declaration of Martial Law and during the regular Batasan in 1984. Hon. Augusto B. Legaspi, SR., Concon delegate in 1971 and OIC governor in 1986-1987; Hon. Ramon B. Legaspi Sr. Congressman from 1986 to 1992; and Hon. Corazon L. Cabagnot Phil. Consul in Guam, who became governor in 1988 to 1995.

It was opined by political pundits that the combined efforts of the Legaspi brothers (Peping, Paeng, Augusto and Ramon) including that of Corazon, daughter of Peping, effected what may be considered an immeasurable improvement in the life of Makaton-ons, as well as in the life of inhabitants of the province of Aklan. They also inferred that the performance of Mayor Ramon Salazar Legaspi, Jr. son of former Congerssman Ramon B. Legaspi Sr., who assumed the position of Chief Executive of the town since 1988 to 1998 cannot be discounted as evidenced by physical improvements he effected under his administration.

Likewise, then Chief Executive of Makato, Hon. Bobby Clyde M. Legaspi, son of the former Concon Delegate and OIC Governor of Aklan Augusto B. Legaspi appeared to be following the footsteps of his father, uncles and cousins in administering the affairs of the

municipality designated to improve the socio – economic conditions of his constituents with the full cooperation and assistance of the municipal and barangay officials, as well as by the general public as a whole. Hon. Wayne T. Malilay served as Mayor in 2001-04. Hon. Ramon S. Legaspi returned to power as LCE after the 2004 elections.

Other eminent sons who contributed their shares to the development of the municipality are Hon. Terencio, then representative Third District of Capiz (now Lone District of Aklan); Hon. Ramon Pamati-an, associate justice of Court of Appeals; Hon. Dioscoro Mationg, founder and director of the Aklan Central Institute (ACI) one of the oldest educational institutions in the province of Aklan, established in 1927; and Hon. Jose T. Tumbokon assemblyman (Aklan) representing Region, 6, Western Visayas (1979-84), who ascended to the Minister of State for Public Information (1981-86).

#### MAKATO TOWN CHIEF EXECUTIVES (Year 1800 to the Present Year 2007)

1800-1850 Jose Laurente, Pedro Bautista, Martin Geronimo, Francisco Cawaling, Bernardo, Pedro de Miguelo, Nepomuceno, Juan Tumco, Diego de Miguel, Bernardo, Juan Tumco, Pedro Bernardo, Pablo Fuentes, Pablo Bernardo, Mariano Bernardo, Mariano Tiongson, Cataño de Miguel, Mariano Bernardo, Francisco Valencia, Diego de Miguel, Marcelino Bernardo, Fernando Reyes, Juan Feliciano, Pablo de los Santos, Pedro Alcantara, Augustin Ceferino, Gregorio de Pedro, Narciso de Pedro, Lucas Templonuevo, Mariano Tiongson, Leon Eusebio, Tomas Custodio, Gregorio Antonio, Martesano de los Santos, Rufino Laurente, Jose Espinosa, Eugenio Fuentes, Mateo Tabuena, Mariano Torrefiel, Florentino de Juan, Antonio Enoc and Sotero de Pedro. 1851-1900: Modesto Tiaña, Victoriano Mariano, Joaquin Teofilo, Jose de los Reyes, Gregorio de Pedro, Domingo Torrefiel, Silvino Tello, Pablo Tesorero, Serapin Tresplacios, Francisco Terencio, Mariano Torrefiel, Jose Santiago, Basilio Fuentes, Esteban Amisola, Leocario Tagle, Mariano Fuentes, Carlos Torrefiel, Eulogio Tejada, Melchor Salazar, Ramon Torre, Teodoro Fuentes, Petronilo Tiongson, Juan Tagle, Isidro Tabanera, Pedro Fuentes, Pio Torres, Anastacio Tabernilla, Lucio Tagle and Juan Torres.

1901-1970: Lucio Tagle, Ambrocio Torres, Jose Castillo, Alfonso Miraflores, Dioscoro Tejada, **Lamberto Tirol**, Juan Tagle, Manuel Acevedo, Espiridion Tocol, Vicente Tejada, Segundo Mobo, Manuel Terencio, Eugenio Tudemos, Buencio Torres, Ermito Torres, Alejandro Legaspi, Nicanor Tesorero, Andres Tumbokon Sr., Peterio Tirol, Eliodoro Goboy, Jose Legaspi, Mansueto Torres and Augusto Legaspi.

1971 to the present: Bienvinido Antoja, Ramon B. Legapi Sr., Augusto B. Legaspi, Felixberto G. Tabanar, Nestor Ginoy, Ramon S. Legaspi Jr., Felixberto Tabañar, Bobby Clyde M. Legaspi, Wayne T. Malilay and Ramon S. Legaspi Jr.

#### MAKATO: 796 YEARS OF HISTORY Marikudo's Landing Synopsis

In an unrecorded era of Philippine History way back before the coming of the First Malayan settlers, there ruled in the Island of Panay a powerful Negrito chieftain name **MARIKUDO**. He divided the island into three district of ruling “sakop”. With the help of his loyal subjects, he sets sail one day on several paraws in quest for the location of his “sakop”. In the course of his expedition, his provisions ran short so he decided to camp in a place called Hagachac which part of the minuro of Baybay. He instructed a party to scour the place in search for food.

The scouring party brought back good news on what they saw in the land. Marikudo's entourage decided to move to it passing through the Tigao River. That impresses the natives about their noble intention. Marikudo orders that all the paraws be decked in full splendor.

News of Marikudo's coming reached the natives. Marikudo and his queen named Maniwantiwan were warmly received by them. There was great rejoicing and profuse exchanges of gifts. A sumptuous feast was prepared and everybody partook of it. Thus, was Marikudo's "sakop" in Aklan established at a site of Poblacion, a place which is an hour sail by the "paraw" from Hagachac and Dapdap, along what is then known as the Tigao River. The Spaniards later named the river "Rio de Makato". (From the record of Makato Historical Committee).